CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method for handling information communicated by voice, said method comprising:

receiving speech input from a plurality of speakers, including a first speaker;

blocking a portion of said speech input that originates from said first speaker; and

processing the remaining portion of said speech input with a computer,

wherein said blocking and said processing are completed during a conversation involving said plurality of speakers.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said blocking further comprises:

storing voice characteristics of said first speaker;

performing speaker recognition on said speech input;

passing to a processing function only that portion of said speech input that does not match said stored voice characteristics.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein said blocking further comprises:

providing a first speech - input device for said first speaker;

determining whether a signal is being received from said first speech - input device;

passing said speech input to a processing function only when no signal is being received from said first speech - input device.

4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

receiving a command for muting from said first speaker; and

responsive to said command, interrupting said speech input.

5. A method for handling information communicated by voice, said method comprising:

receiving speech input from a plurality of parties to a telephone conversation, including a first speaker;

blocking a portion of said speech input that originates from said first speaker; and

performing speech recognition on the remaining portion of said speech input,

wherein said blocking, and said performing speech recognition, are completed during said telephone conversation.

6. The method of Claim 5, further comprising identifying key words in said remaining portion.

7. The method of Claim 5, wherein said blocking further comprises:

storing voice characteristics of said first speaker;

performing speaker recognition on said speech input;

passing to a speech recognition function only that portion of said speech input that does not match said stored voice characteristics.

8. The method of Claim 5, wherein said blocking further comprises:

providing a first speech - input device for said first speaker;

determining whether a signal is being received from said first speech - input device;

passing said speech input to a speech recognition function only

when no signal is being received from said first speech - input device.

9. The method of Claim 5, further comprising:
receiving a command for muting from said first speaker; and
responsive to said command, interrupting said speech input.

10. A system for handling information communicated by voice, said system comprising:
means for receiving speech input from a plurality of parties to a telephone conversation, including a first speaker;
means for blocking a portion of said speech input that originates from said first speaker; and
means for performing speech recognition on the remaining portion of said speech input,
wherein said means for blocking, and said means for performing speech recognition, complete their operations during said telephone conversation.

11. The system of Claim 10, further comprising means for identifying key words in said remaining portion.

12. The system of Claim 10, wherein said means for blocking further comprises:
means for storing voice characteristics of said first speaker;
means for performing speaker recognition on said speech input;
means for passing to a speech recognition function only that portion of said speech input that does not match said stored voice characteristics.

13. The system of Claim 10, wherein said means for blocking
further comprises:

a first speech - input device for said first speaker;

means for determining whether a signal is being received from

5   said first speech - input device;

means for passing said speech input to a speech recognition

function only when no signal is being received from said first

speech - input device.

10   14. The system of Claim 10, further comprising:

means for receiving a command for muting from said first speaker;

and

means responsive to said command, for interrupting said speech

input.

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15. A computer-usable medium having computer-executable

instructions for handling information communicated by voice, said

computer-executable instructions comprising:

means for receiving speech input from a plurality of parties to a

20   telephone conversation, including a first speaker;

means for blocking a portion of said speech input that originates

from said first speaker; and

means for performing speech recognition on the remaining portion

of said speech input,

25   wherein said means for blocking, and said means for performing

speech recognition, complete their operations during said

telephone conversation.

16. The computer-usable medium of Claim 15, further comprising

30   means for identifying key words in said remaining portion.

17. The computer-usable medium of Claim 15, wherein said means for blocking further comprises:

means for storing voice characteristics of said first speaker;

means for performing speaker recognition on said speech input;

means for passing to a speech recognition function only that portion of said speech input that does not match said stored voice characteristics.

18. The computer-usable medium of Claim 15, wherein said means for blocking further comprises:

means for determining whether a signal is being received from a first speech - input device for said first speaker;

means for passing said speech input to a speech recognition function only when no signal is being received from said first speech - input device.

19. The computer-usable medium of Claim 15, further comprising:

means for receiving a command for muting from said first speaker; and

means responsive to said command, for interrupting said speech input.